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General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
2nd meeting
Monday, 3 October 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Choi Young jin ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Expression of sympathy in connection with the terrorist bombings in Bali, Indonesia

The Chairman: Before we proceed with our work, allow me, in my capacity as presiding officer of the First Committee, to make a brief comment on the terrorist attack that occurred on 1 October in Bali, Indonesia. I should like to say that our sympathy and prayers are with the victims of the terrorist attack and with their families.

Introductory statements

The Chairman: This morning, the First Committee, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable, will begin its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items.

It is an honour and a privilege for me to chair the First Committee at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. As Chairman of this important Committee, I will spare no effort to bring its deliberations to a successful conclusion. However, that can only be achieved with the full support and cooperation of each and every delegation. In that regard, the constructive engagement of all members, based on a spirit of harmony and compromise, is needed more than anything else if we are to enjoy a fruitful outcome to our nearly five-week-long deliberations.

It is no secret that there is a prevailing sense of crisis nowadays in terms of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. That has been brought on by the continuation of a long stalemate and by a lack of progress due to sharp divisions in perceptions and perspectives among us. The most important disarmament mechanisms — including the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — are all now at an impasse. The situation has not been improved by the failure to negotiate a disarmament and non-proliferation section to the outcome document of September's High-level Plenary Meeting.

Against that backdrop, many desire this year's First Committee session to bring a glimmer of hope that we might break that impasse and reinvigorate the multilateral processes of disarmament and non-proliferation. Those mechanisms are too important to be left in limbo indefinitely. The issues that we are dealing with in the Committee will have far-reaching and long-lasting implications for national, regional and global security. I share the view that at this juncture the First Committee should play a leading role in galvanizing the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation processes. I will do my best to achieve that invaluable goal. In doing so, I count on the support and cooperation of the Committee.

It is now my pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Mr. Abe (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I am grateful for this opportunity once again to address the members of the First Committee as it begins its work on the important agenda before it. I should first like to extend my personal congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, upon your election to guide the work of the Committee. I also wish to extend my appreciation to the other members of the Bureau and to assure them all of the fullest cooperation and support from the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. My colleagues and I look forward to providing whatever assistance may be required to ensure that this will be an efficient and productive session.

We meet at a particularly difficult and challenging moment for disarmament and non-proliferation. It is a time of heightened global anxiety about weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and I believe that it is our responsibility, even more than is normally the case, to use this session to promote and strengthen the various multilateral efforts to reduce or eliminate the threat they pose. However, it can be a secret to no one in this room that collectively we are at present signally stumbling in our efforts to meet that challenge. The recent world summit demonstrated that States could not agree on the way forward on disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. I believe that the words of the Secretary-General both perfectly encapsulate the nature of the problem and set it in its wider context. In his address to the world summit, he said,

> "Twice this year — at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and now at this summit — we have allowed posturing to get in the way of results. That is inexcusable. Weapons of mass destruction pose a grave danger to us all, particularly in a world threatened by terrorists with global ambitions and no inhibitions. We must pick up the pieces in order to renew negotiations on that vital issue". (*A/60/PV.1, p. 5*)

I will also quote from the letter the President of the General Assembly, Jan Eliasson, wrote to all Permanent Representatives on 30 September. That was just last Friday, so members may not yet have seen it. He wrote,

> "The document should not set a limit on our ambitions; rather, it should be a beachhead from which we launch ourselves forward. We should recognize that it does not incorporate all that many of you wanted. There are some areas which the document does not address in detail where many would rightly like to see progress during the sixtieth session. One such area is disarmament and non-proliferation, on which I would encourage new and creative thinking in all appropriate forums".

It falls in some large measure to this Committee to begin that task of trying to pick up the pieces and to provide fresh orientations. You, the members, are expected to provide guidance about the way in which the Conference on Disarmament might address the long-awaited negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as well as on such issues as negative security assurances, outer space and the fundamental question of complete nuclear disarmament. You may consider what practical steps we may take to ensure the continuing health and strength of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

It is too important a matter for us to stand idle. The urgent international concern about the imminent proliferation risk is still there. Nuclear warheads still number in the thousands. It was therefore very encouraging to note that the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Norway, Romania, South Africa and the United Kingdom took the initiative to seek a consensus in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in preparation for the world summit. I am encouraged to note that some Member States, for example, Norway, out of concern about the current critical state of affairs, have expressed their willingness to continue their efforts to seek a new consensus. In this connection, I note that the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was held immediately following the world summit in New York to reaffirm the determination to bring the CTBT into force and to underline its importance for world disarmament and non-proliferation.

In implementing the agreements reached at last year's session, the First Committee has invited a number of experts to the thematic discussion on substantive issues. International treaty organizations as well as Chairpersons of the United Nations disarmament bodies will participate as well, with a

view to promoting interactive discussions in the Committee. This is a new attempt, and the Secretariat will be open to further suggestions. Representatives of civil society — for example, the Middle Powers Initiative and the Mayors for Peace — have expressed their intention to engage in the debates with members of the First Committee. Through these occasions, members may sense the outside temperature and broaden this perspectives.

Biological and chemical weapons also remain major items on our agenda, because of their potentially massive and indiscriminate effects. The year 2005 has seen important anniversaries, such as that of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which first sought to ban both classes of weapon, and the 1975 entry into force of the Biological Weapons Convention. Many will already be looking ahead to the sixth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, to be held in 2006, and hoping that it can successfully map the way ahead. The real challenge here remains that of bringing these treaties closer to universality and securing full and effective compliance.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs is not sitting idly by as concern increases regarding the threat of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It is assisting the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). With the help of a group of experts, the Committee is currently examining the national reports submitted by Member States. There are many measures to be taken to establish domestic laws and regulations, to criminalize activities concerning proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to non-State actors and to establish and tighten export and border controls. Furthermore, the Committee is actively pursuing outreach activities and assistance in cooperation with willing Member States.

The preponderant focus on the WMD threat should not lessen our attention to matters relating to regulation and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces. Despite the fact that much progress has been made by the international community to address the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons, their proliferation continues to pose a serious threat to peace and security in too many regions of the world. It is too easily overlooked that conventional weapons continue to kill many thousands of people every year. These are often everyday tragedies that are rarely reported but which bring human misery and suffering in their wake. I look forward to the Committee taking action for the early and effective implementation of the draft international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons, and I look forward to the Committee providing direction for the way forward for subsequent work.

On a related matter, members will recall that there will be a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in Implementation of the Programme of Action. The Review Conference itself will be held from 26 June to 7 July 2006, and the Preparatory Committee will meet from 9 to 20 January 2006. It is my understanding that the African Group is to nominate the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, while the Asian non-group will provide the Chairman for the Review Conference. Given the time factor, it would be greatly appreciated if the groups concerned could nominate the respective Chairmen as soon as possible so that the Secretariat may begin working earnestly on the preparations for these meetings.

May I now draw attention to another part of the world summit outcome document (resolution 60/1), paragraph 146, which states

> "We reaffirm our commitment to strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address effectively, and in accordance with the purposes and principles of its Charter, the full range of challenges of our time. We are determined to reinvigorate the intergovernmental organs of the United Nations and to adapt them to the needs of the twenty-first century".

That is exactly what the First Committee has been striving for. I recall the intensive discussions we had last year on how to improve the effectiveness of the work of the Committee. The summit has given renewed emphasis to such efforts and we therefore look forward to the Committee's continued efforts towards this goal.

I remember addressing the question of economizing and making effective use of the reports prepared by the Secretariat in compliance with resolutions of the General Assembly. I shall have an opportunity to report on that matter later during the proceedings.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs has also been reviewing the work of our three regional

centres — in Latin America and the Caribbean; in Africa; and in Asia and the Pacific — with a view of better serving Member States. I shall continue my consultations with many delegations in the weeks ahead.

All delegations will have received this morning, at their Missions and on their desks, a copy of the 2004 edition of the *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. The *Yearbook* is a centrepiece of the Department's information programme. It contains condensed background information on the annual activities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Pursuant to the request of the General Assembly, made last year, that the Department use more electronic means to disseminate information, the Department, for the first time, will soon post an electronic version in English of the 2004 *Yearbook* on its website, as well as electronic archive versions in English of the 2002 and 2003 *Yearbooks*. An announcement will be made when the Web site is ready for use.

Although the work ahead for the Committee will, I am sure, at times be difficult, I hope that we can collectively try to raise our sights and our aspirations in order to try to move beyond current preoccupations in order to address properly the fundamental problems that are of concern to us all. I believe, above all, that we owe a duty to those many millions of people outside this room who ultimately look to us and to this Organization to guide and light the way ahead.

Please, therefore, accept my very best wishes for an effective, successful and productive session.

Agenda items 85 to 105

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: Before calling on the first speaker in the general debate, I should like to discuss a couple of organizational matters. First, the speakers' list will close at 6 p.m. tomorrow, and I urge delegations to place their names on the list before the deadline. It is a rolling list, so delegations may be requested to speak earlier than anticipated.

Secondly, we have agreed to limit our statements to between seven and 10 minutes for those speaking their national capacity and to 10 to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. The "traffic light" will remain green for the first seven minutes for those speaking in their national capacity and for 10 minutes for those speaking for several delegations. Then it will turn yellow to remind speakers that it is time to wrap up their remarks.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, Mr. Chairman, I would like to echo the condolences you addressed to the people and the Government of Indonesia with respect to this weekend's attacks.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Rio Group, composed of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and my own country, Argentina.

The Rio Group is convinced that multilateralism is the only way to maintain international peace and security and that a common effort by all States to agree collectively on instruments and mechanisms will lead us to guarantee mutual security. We continue to be pioneers in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation because we are convinced of its importance for international peace and security. That is why we note with a degree of perplexity that the outcome document of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1) does not include reference to the issue of disarmament and international security.

At the same time, today, more than 30 years after adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Rio Group is pleased that the States parties to that Treaty were in the vanguard with respect to convening the first Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones. At that Conference, held in Tlatelolco, Mexico, from 26 to 28 April 2005, the Tlatelolco Declaration was adopted. It warns of the threat that the continued existence of nuclear weapons represents for humanity and stresses the importance of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in verifying that nuclear energy is used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

We are especially worried about the crisis of the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole. The Conference on Disarmament and now also the Disarmament Commission are blocked due to the lack of political will to agree on a balanced agenda that includes the issue of nuclear disarmament.

It is with that concern in mind that the Rio Group regrets the failure of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held last May. The lack of agreement on the adoption of a document that could reflect existing challenges alerts us to the efforts that still have to be made on the three pillars of the regime: disarmament, non-proliferation and the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this regard, we reaffirm the validity of the 13 practical steps agreed upon at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, in particular the call to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the immediate commencement of negotiations in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament of a fissile material cut-off convention and the establishment of an organ with a mandate to address nuclear disarmament.

In this context, the Rio Group takes note of the initiative on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation presented by a group of seven countries, led by Norway. This initiative could be a first step in renewing the commitment of all Member States to this issue.

Indeed, general and complete disarmament is a crucial tool that should be used to reduce political asymmetry and bolster the international order on the basis of the principle of the sovereign equality of all States. Moreover, it is in the common interest of all peoples not to live with the threat of weapons of mass destruction. The strengthening of international peace and security and the promotion of general and complete disarmament complement and reinforce each other. The strengthening of the non-proliferation regime should be accompanied by access to technology by States that fully comply with their international obligations.

The international community has also been and remains committed to the elimination of chemical and biological weapons, and to the early conclusion of a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. In this regard, the Rio Group will continue working actively for strict compliance in good faith with the obligations contained in all instruments dealing with disarmament and with the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We advocate their universalization as a goal to be met in the first decade of the twenty-first century, because that is the only way it will be possible to lay the foundation for mutually assured security — our paramount objective.

In the multilateral disarmament and security system, confidence-building measures have taken the form of mechanisms for the exchange of information within the framework of certain instruments, such as a system for the standardized reporting of information on military expenditures and the Register of Conventional Arms. The Rio Group has played an active role in the promotion of these and other more advanced confidence-building measures, both generally, and, in particular, within our region, to achieve the integrated economic, social and political development of our peoples.

The excessive accumulation of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, is both a consequence of tension and conflict and a cause of their exacerbation or prolongation. It also contributes to high crime rates. The Rio Group welcomes the holding of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and renews its commitment to the full implementation of the Programme's recommendations. The Rio Group strongly believes that Member States should use the July 2006 Review Conference as an opportunity to strengthen that instrument through the inclusion of such issues as those related to arms transfers. At the same time, the Rio Group would like to express its profound disappointment at Member States' lack of determination to adopt a strong, legally binding instrument on marking and tracing. We regret once again that it was not possible to obtain a clear commitment to move forward to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Our region possesses a legally binding instrument, the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. Although the Rio Group is committed to the draft instrument negotiated last June by the Working Group on marking and tracing, we cannot but highlight that it was a very modest contribution to addressing what is quite simply an illicit activity, and we will continue working to achieve a legally binding instrument.

The problem of anti-personnel mines is far from being solved, but at least the international community has sought a global response through the Ottawa

Convention. That is why the countries of the Rio Group have proposed that, in the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), the hemisphere should become a zone free of anti-personnel mines. The Rio Group will continue to work arduously in order to make possible this objective, together with cooperation in demining and victim assistance, because these are fundamental and complementary aspects of alleviating suffering and opening the way to development.

We are going through a time of transition that is resulting in adaptation and redefinition in the light of new international conditions. Together, we must all maintain a dialogue and consult so as to contribute in a positive way to narrowing differences on the design of a future global security system.

That is how the Rio Group understands it, and, for that reason, we would like to stress that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean has once again met expectation with regard to the proposed objectives. We congratulate its Director and his team, and we urge countries in a position to do so to contribute financially to the Lima Centre so that it can continue making progress in the implementation of its programmes.

Before concluding, we express our recognition and gratitude to the outgoing Chairman of the First Committee, Ambassador Alfonso de Alba, the representative of a State member of the Rio Group.

We hope that this First Committee session will be fruitful. For that purpose, Mr. Chairman, you can count on the full cooperation of my country and of all the other Rio Group countries.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Sir, I take pleasure in extending our most sincere congratulations to you on your election to the chairmanship. Allow me to assure you that you will have our fullest support throughout the Committee's work. I also wish to clearly state our support for the statement just delivered by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group, including what he had to say with regard to the events in Indonesia.

The General Assembly is the most democratic and representative of United Nations organs; the countries gathered here must continue to promote its full revitalization. Last year we agreed upon reforms that will allow us to make more efficient use of the time and resources allocated to the First Committee. We also opened the door to a more productive, focused and transparent discussion. There is no doubt, however, that much remains to be done to achieve not only greater efficiency, but greater effectiveness. Indeed, greater effectiveness is what we need above all.

Recognizing that our working methods were obsolescent was only the first step in reform. Abandoning the negotiating patterns developed during the cold war must be the next. Disagreements between the contesting Powers of that time has merely been replaced today by disagreement among countries that are supposed to share fundamental values and objectives. Thus, extreme positions — not shared by the great majority of Member States — continue to dominate the multilateral disarmament agenda, resulting only in paralysis. It is ironic that while threats to peace and international security grow in their dimensions and sophistication, trust in multilateral action — which is more than ever necessary to confront those threats effectively — seems to diminish proportionally.

Mexico stresses that nuclear disarmament is not an option; it is a legal obligation. That is why we deeply regret both the breakdown of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the failure at the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to agree on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, which meant that those issues were not addressed in its recommendations. An extremely valuable opportunity was lost. Those failures compound the problems that have been facing the institutional disarmament machinery for a number of years now — notably, the intolerable deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and the abuse of the consensus rule that continues to block the adoption of a programme of work for that forum. That is why we feel the time has come to search for alternative approaches to move the Conference's agenda forward.

Mexico confirms its unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects and deems it imperative to pursue efforts towards the total and definitive elimination of nuclear arsenals. It seems incredible that in the twenty-first century the world continues, as it did 60 years ago, to live under the nuclear threat and with uncertainty that treaties are being complied with. In 1945, we

witnessed the barbarity of nuclear war and its devastating effects on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That dreadful holocaust sparked a virtually universal awareness of the imperative of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Yet today there are still more than 30,000 nuclear warheads with inconceivable destructive potential. The nuclear option has been retained as a key element in the security strategies of certain countries, including against States that do not posses such weapons. Worse still, such weapons continue to be developed.

That is why, today more than ever, we demand that it is high time to destroy nuclear arsenals and to implement measures that will forestall any chance of those truly inhuman weapons being used. We must not forget that what does not exist cannot proliferate, and that, so long as there are stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, so, too, will the possibility exist of their being used or of their falling into the hands of non-State actors. Together with Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden and South Africa — members of the New Agenda Coalition — and with the backing of the vast majority of United Nations Member States, we shall continue to systematically reject the delusion that nuclear weapons can be stored without their ever being used, by accident or deliberately, and we will continue to press the point that the only acceptable guarantee against such eventualities lies in their total elimination. We also reaffirm that the 13 practical steps on nuclear disarmament adopted in 2000, as well as the unequivocal commitment of nuclear-weapon States to fulfil them, are fully valid today.

Mexico is optimistic about the understanding reached on 19 September in Beijing in the framework of the six-party talks, through which the parties have worked to agree on measures that would make it possible to move towards the goal of a denuclearized Korean peninsula.

However, Mexico is concerned by certain actions that run counter to the spirit of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We stress the importance of having NPT States parties, including, in particular, the Islamic Republic of Iran, offer clear-cut guarantees that they are using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and in strict compliance with nuclear safeguards. We also emphasize the need to avoid politicization in cases that can be resolved within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency. By the same token, Mexico is concerned that in a recent nuclear cooperation agreement for civilian purposes between India and the United States no consideration was given to the principle of universalizing the NPT, and that, to the contrary, such an agreement was reached with a State not party to the Treaty.

In 2004, at this very forum, we announced the convening of a Conference of the States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. Today, we join the representative of the Rio Group in celebrating the successful outcome of that event. Mexico affirms its commitment to support the agreements reached there in favour of greater cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones with a view to strengthening and consolidating them.

Finally, I would point out that Mexico is advancing a number of initiatives to strengthen the Programme of Action adopted in 2001 within the framework of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We believe that at the 2006 Review Conference we will need to address elements that will complement and enhance the Programme of Action. In that regard, Mexico regrets the limited reach of the draft instrument on the identification and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons, as well as the fact that it is not legally binding.

I wish finally to stress that my country will continue to promote the universalization of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines and the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009, with the aim of preserving the humanitarian perspective of the Convention, in addition to supporting efforts to establish an anti-personnel-landmine-free zone.

Mr. Freeman (United Kingdom): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania. The candidate countries Turkey and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union is deeply committed to the United Nations, to upholding and developing

international law and to effective multilateralism. The work of the First Committee on disarmament and international security is a critical element within the United Nations, reflecting its primary aim of removing the scourge of war from our world. The work of the Committee must reflect the most pressing contemporary challenges of our interdependent world. That is why the European Union has been very committed to the revitalization of the First Committee and joins those who stress the importance of the implementation of the principles all of us agreed to last year. In my statement, I would like to focus on the key interdependent challenges we all face, which we will expand on later in more specific interventions.

This year has been an important one for the United Nations. We are celebrating its sixtieth anniversary, and we meet here only weeks after the 2005 world summit. As the Secretary-General said at the summit, we live in a world in which we all benefit from collective security and all suffer when it is lacking. Development, security and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. International security also depends upon social development, the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), environmental sustainability and the promotion of international trade.

Positive steps on peace and security were taken at the summit. We welcome the agreement to establish a Peacebuilding Commission — one of the EU's priorities — to break the cycle of conflict that afflicts so many parts of the world. For the first time, the United Nations will have a single forum in which the wider international community, including regional political players, donors and the international financial institutions, can come together to assist countries emerging from conflict. We hope that that will reduce further violence, with its huge human and financial costs. Getting the Commission established by the 31 December 2005 deadline is a top EU objective for this autumn.

We also strongly welcome the agreement on the responsibility to protect. International recognition that we cannot stand by as the very worst atrocities — including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity — are committed, is an important step forward for peace and security and for the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. It is a recognition that the world in which we now live is too small for us to be unaffected by, or indifferent to, the innocent victims of murder and oppression. The European Union is committed to playing its part. Today, the European Union is on the ground as military, police or civilian presence, in Bosnia, Aceh, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and — with the African Union — in Darfur.

There were some significant steps forward on terrorism at the summit. The EU strongly endorses Security Council resolution 1624 (2005), adopted by the Council during the summit, urging all States to make incitement of terrorism illegal and to combat extremist ideologies. We also welcome the condemnation of terrorism at the summit, and strongly support the call for urgent action to develop the Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy. We should now commit ourselves to concluding and agreeing upon the draft of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, including a legal definition of terrorist acts, during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

However, there were also setbacks at the summit. The European Union regrets that no consensus on non-proliferation and disarmament language in the outcome document was reached. We agree with the Secretary-General that that was a considerable disappointment. It comes in a year in which, regrettably, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was not able to agree upon a substantive outcome. We believe that the international community must take responsibility and address the serious threat posed to peace and security by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We recognize that that outcome requires due reflection from us all. The European Union worked tirelessly on the basis of a common position, at both the NPT Review Conference and the summit, to make progress on those and related issues, including disarmament and peaceful uses. We will continue that work in all the relevant international forums, including this Committee, over the coming weeks.

As expressed in the European Union's Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass destruction, we are convinced that a multilateral approach to non-proliferation provides the best means of countering that threat to international security. As we said in our 2003 Common Position on multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation, we support the universal ratification of, and adherence to, the NPT,

the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, as well as the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Those key instruments provide a basis for the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. They contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, including the fight against terrorism.

The NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its article VI, and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The Treaty is as vital as ever. We continue to defend that consensus, on the basis of the framework established by the NPT, by supporting the decisions and the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, and we will bear in mind the current situation. We note also that the final report, which includes the programme of work, adopted by consensus at the 2005 NPT Review Conference, constitutes a reference for the future review process in which the European Union will engage, on the basis of its Common Position. We also continue to work towards universal accession to the NPT and call on those States not yet parties to it to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

The European Union considers that comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with additional protocols, constitute the current verification standard of the International Atomic Energy Agency and are the essential means for States parties to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their obligations under the NPT. We support the strengthening of the role of the Security Council as the final arbiter of international peace and security in order that it can take appropriate action in the event of non-compliance with NPT obligations.

The European Union places the utmost importance on the earliest possible entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty to prohibit all nuclear-weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions. We reaffirmed our commitment to the CTBT with our support for the final declaration, delivered on behalf of the ratifiers and States signatory of the Treaty at the conclusion of the recent article XIV review conference, held here in New York. We also continue to call for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, without preconditions, and bearing in mind the Special Coordinator's report (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein. We are concerned about the continuing inability of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work and begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The Iranian nuclear programme continues to be a matter of grave concern for the European Union. The EU strongly supports the efforts of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, in association with the European Union's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, to find an acceptable agreement to rebuild international confidence in Iran's intentions. We recognize the inalienable right of NPT parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of the NPT. However, maintaining the balance between rights and obligations envisaged in the Treaty is essential. We believe that it is incumbent on a non-compliant State to return to full compliance and to build the necessary confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities, in the specific case of Iran through the suspension of fissile material production and enrichment-related activities.

The resolution adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors on 24 September, finding Iran non-compliant with its obligations under the NPT but deferring the report to the Security Council, gives Iran an opportunity now to address the clear concerns of the international community. The European side, for its part, is prepared to resume negotiations within the framework agreed between the Europeans and Iran last November. It is only when Iran demonstrates beyond any doubt that it is not seeking a nuclear-weapons capability that it will be able to develop a better relationship with Europe and with the international community as a whole.

We welcome the joint statement made by the participants in the six-party talks on 19 September and recognize the hard work, flexibility and cooperation shown by those participants. We note in particular the

renewal of the commitment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon nuclear weapons and all existing nuclear programmes and its undertaking to return to the NPT. However, the European Union considers the nuclear-weapons programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be a serious violation of its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, its International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement, the Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Joint North-South Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We continue to deplore the stated intention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to withdraw from the NPT and urge the adoption of measures to deal with withdrawal from the Treaty. The European Union has supported the six-party talks throughout the process, and remains ready to assist in whatever way it can.

International treaty regimes and export-control arrangements have made an important contribution over many years to preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and associated delivery systems. However, we have entered a new and particularly dangerous period that raises the possibility of a weapons-of-mass-destruction arms race and of acquisition by non-State actors. The European Security Strategy of 2003 highlighted the threat posed by terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The illicit trade related to weapons of mass destruction, in particular in highly sensitive nuclear equipment and technology, is of serious concern, and we must be united in a common endeavour to strengthen the non-proliferation regime by closing existing loopholes. The European Union is committed to strong national and internationally coordinated export controls to complement our obligations under the NPT. We also strongly support the important non-proliferation measures within Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to prevent the illicit traffic in nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials. States must continue that vital work. In addition, we support and encourage States to participate in the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials; the Proliferation Security Initiative — the Krakow Initiative; the Global Threat Reduction Initiative; and to continue to support the work of the G-8 Global Partnership.

The European Union is convinced that an arms race in outer space should be prevented given the international community's increased involvement in space-based activities aimed at global development and progress. Such prevention is an essential condition for the strengthening of strategic stability and for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The European Union believes that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has an essential role in countering the threat of chemical weapons and urges States that are not parties to it adhere to that treaty. The Chemical Weapons Convention is a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument that must be strictly applied. We are equally supportive of the Organization that is ensuring the implementation of the CWC and compliance with its demands — the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The EU also believes the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) has an essential role in countering the threat of biological weapons and urges States that are not parties to it adhere to it. In 2006, we will play an active role at the BTWC Review Conference to secure a substantive outcome and strengthen the Convention and compliance with it.

At the same time as taking strong action to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, we must limit the carnage caused by small arms and light weapons. The European Union believes that easy access to small arms and light weapons exacerbates conflicts, facilitates violent crime and terrorism, impedes post-conflict reconstruction and undermines long-term sustainable development. Additional measures should be taken to combat the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons.

The European Union supports the inclusion of minimum common international controls on small arms and light weapons transfers and provisions on ammunition in the United Nations Programme of Action, and calls for those issues to be discussed at the forthcoming Preparatory Committee in January 2006 and at the Review meeting in June 2006.

In the wider context of the need to control the undesirable proliferation of conventional weapons, the European Union is supportive of calls for an international agreement on the arms trade as a comprehensive instrument based on universally

accepted norms and standards. We encourage other States and regions to engage in the discussion and to express their support for action in that area.

In one specific area, the easy availability of weapons increases markedly the threat all of us face from terrorists; the use of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems as a means to threaten civil aviation warrants immediate action by the international community.

Since the Ottawa Convention, or Mine-Ban Treaty, entered into force in 1999, significant progress has been made, with the use and production of anti-personnel mines being reduced significantly, and trade has virtually ceased. Large areas of the world which had been seriously affected by those indiscriminate weapons have now been cleared and human suffering significantly reduced. We will continue to work to improve the effectiveness of the international mine-action system and to promote the universalization of the Mine-Ban Treaty.

The European Union also believes that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is an important and influential instrument of international humanitarian law in restricting the use of certain types of weaponry. We hope that, at the meeting of States parties to the CCW in November, progress will be made towards a consensus on the balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations in controlling the use of those weapons.

The United Nations will be judged by its ability to respond to the most pressing threats we face, ranging from development and conflict, environmental degradation, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. The international community will be judged by the strength of its resolve. The European Union stands ready to use this session of the General Assembly to help in this task.

Mr. Rademaker (United States of America): Let me begin by saying how pleased I am to see the representative of a close friend and ally, Ambassador Choi of the Republic of Korea, chairing this body. Mr. Chairman, the United States delegation looks forward to working with you and the other members of the Bureau to make this session a constructive one that demonstrates the value of our revitalized First Committee.

In that regard, Sir, our delegation wishes to make special note of your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador De Alba of Mexico, another close friend, whose skilled chairmanship guided this Committee last year to the adoption by consensus of resolution 59/95 and other measures to improve our collective effectiveness.

This year's meeting of the First Committee is especially significant, as it follows the recent Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and the high-level event. Both of those gatherings were unable to produce consensus statements on arms control and non-proliferation priorities. The United States does not, however, share the oft-expressed view that those meetings were failures because they did not produce consensus statements. We consider more significant the fact that those meetings demonstrated overwhelming consensus on certain common goals, which I intend to spell out here and which our delegation will emphasize over the next five weeks.

One point on which we all agree is the importance of United Nations reform. The high-level event made a start in that direction, but did not go nearly far enough. Delegations in the First Committee can take justified pride in having taken the lead in revitalizing the General Assembly. Now it is up to delegations to take advantage of our decisions last year to focus the Committee's work on the challenges that we face today and will face in the future.

Naturally, most of the responsibility for refocusing the Committee's activities falls on the Member States. No single resolution or rule or procedure will ensure that States refrain from introducing outdated resolutions, or that delegations participate actively in sessions set aside for thematic debate, or otherwise consult in a transparent manner. Delegations may rest assured, however, that the United States delegation will bear its fair share of that burden.

The challenges that we confront today differ profoundly from those of the cold war. During the cold war, we worried about nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, and we relied on deterrence and a web of bilateral strategic arms control treaties to contain that risk. The preoccupations of the twenty-first century are different, however, as are the policies required to address today's threats.

Today, our foremost fear is the acquisition and possible use of weapons of mass destruction by rogue States, by terrorists or — perhaps most worrisome of all — by terrorists armed by rogue States. Deterrence

is a weak reed on which to lean in confronting these kinds of actors, who fundamentally will not be deterred. Moreover, traditional arms control treaties alone cannot protect against such risks, particularly in a world where certain countries do not honour their commitments as enshrined in those treaties. We need to elaborate more appropriate strategies to address the threats we face today.

I am pleased to report that the United States, joined by many other members of the international community, is making progress in developing new strategies for confronting today's threats.

A prime example is the Proliferation Security Initiative, which President Bush launched two years ago in Krakow, Poland, in order to strengthen our collective capacity to stop shipments of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, or related materials to or from States or non-State actors of proliferation concern.

Since then, like-minded countries, including many represented here, have put their diplomatic, military, law enforcement and intelligence assets to work in a multinational yet flexible fashion. We have begun applying existing laws and legal principles in innovative ways, cooperating as never before to interdict shipments, disrupt proliferation networks and hold accountable the front companies that support them.

These efforts have yielded concrete results. Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) cooperation, for example, has in a number of instances stopped the trans-shipment of material and equipment bound for ballistic missile programs in countries of concern, including Iran. PSI is not a treaty-based initiative. There is no formal organization with a budget or with a headquarters. Rather, it is a set of activities among participating nations which act in a manner consistent with their respective national legal authorities and international law to deter, disrupt and prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

We also have established new mechanisms through the United Nations to address the WMD proliferation threat. In April 2004, the Security Council adopted its resolution 1540 (2004), establishing legally binding obligations on all United Nations Member States to enact and enforce legal and regulatory measures to prevent proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems by State or non-State actors. Governments also have been working to impede the ability of proliferators to access banking systems and to form partnerships with legitimate companies. As one of the requirements of resolution 1540 (2004), States must put in place laws designed to prevent the provision of any form of assistance, including financial, to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire or transfer WMDs and their means of delivery.

Group of Eight leaders at the Gleneagles Summit emphasized the need for further cooperation to identify, track and freeze relevant financial transactions and assets. To this end, President Bush has issued Executive Order 13382, which authorizes the United States Government to freeze assets and block transactions of entities and persons engaged in proliferation activities. We urge other States to consider how they might implement similar authorities, consistent with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The United States has also proposed measures to prevent nuclear proliferation by strengthening controls on enrichment and reprocessing technology. We will continue to work for agreement on these controls in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, while also working to ensure that States renouncing enrichment and reprocessing have reliable access to fuel for civil nuclear power reactors. We are working with major suppliers and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on an assured supply mechanism to provide backup for States that forgo investment in indigenous enrichment or reprocessing capabilities.

Beyond this list of initiatives, I wish to stress our continued commitment to addressing today's threats through traditional diplomacy. We are working diplomatically and energetically to address two of the most serious proliferation threats facing the world today: North Korea and Iran. As all delegations are aware, North Korea and Iran exemplify the alarming breakdown of compliance with the core non-proliferation undertakings contained in articles II and III of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that we confront today from a small number of countries.

In the case of North Korea, our goal is to preserve the NPT by insisting on the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of both the plutonium and the uranium nuclear-weapons

programmes in that country, as well as the dismantlement of all nuclear weapons. We are pleased that, just two weeks ago today, we and our partners in the six-party process were able to agree on a joint statement that, we hope, will provide a path to the realization of these objectives.

In the case of Iran, IAEA investigations have exposed almost two decades of clandestine nuclear work, as well as a pattern of evasion and deception that can only be explained as part of an illegal nuclear-weapons programme. Earlier this year, the United States lent its strong support to the efforts of the United Kingdom, France and Germany to negotiate objective guarantees that would assure the international community that Iran has given up the pursuit of nuclear weapons. In August, however, Iran spurned these negotiations by violating the 2004 Paris Agreement on which the negotiations were founded. This, in turn, led to the adoption by the IAEA Board of Governors, just one week ago, of a resolution finding Iran in non-compliance with its nuclear non-proliferation obligations and committing the Board to report Iran's non-compliance to the Security Council and to the General Assembly, as required under the IAEA Statute.

We applaud this exercise in effective multilateralism and hope that it will persuade the Iranian Government to return to the negotiating table on the basis of the 2004 Paris Agreement. Should Iran decline to do so, however, the Board of Governors will have no alternative but to fulfil its obligation under the IAEA Statute and the recently adopted Board resolution to report the matter to the United Nations. In the meantime, we hope that all Governments will take note of the Board's finding of non-compliance and adjust their national policies accordingly. We think it self-evident, for example, that, in the face of such a finding, no Government should permit new nuclear transfers to Iran, and all that ongoing nuclear projects should be frozen.

The United States continues to support the immediate start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. This is an issue ripe for negotiation, and we are convinced that an agreement negotiated quickly would contribute to international security.

As delegations know well, the United States has concluded that effective verification of such treaty is not realistically achievable and that to include ineffective verification provisions would create an appearance of assurance that does not comport with reality. For this reason, we oppose including verification measures in a fissile material cut-off treaty. Consequently, the United States supports a negotiating mandate that does not refer to verification measures. We advocate the adoption of a clean negotiating mandate on such a treaty, unencumbered by linkages to unrelated proposals. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament can get to work on this matter soon after it reconvenes in January. In the interim, the United States renews its call on all States that have not done so to implement moratoriums on fissile material production for nuclear weapons purposes. We are gratified that all but one of the NPT nuclear-weapon States have done so already, consistent with their article VI obligations and as an example to others.

Along with a fissile material cut-off treaty, the United States has also proposed that the Conference on Disarmament negotiate a ban on the sale or export of all persistent landmines. We believe that this measure would help alleviate the serious problem created by the widespread use of landmines that last long after battles are over, and that maim or kill tens of thousands of innocent civilians every year. This approach complements other international restrictions on landmines, and we urge the members of the Conference on Disarmament to give it prompt and favourable consideration.

Finally, I should like to provide the Committee with an update on the latest developments in nuclear disarmament. On 19 September the United States completed the deactivation of its entire force of Peacekeeper intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Just three years ago, this missile force comprised 50 ICBMs, each capable of carrying 10 nuclear warheads. All now have been taken out of service, consistent with our obligations under the Moscow Treaty of 2002. The empty Peacekeeper silos will remain accountable under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and will be subject to inspection. This latest step implementing President Bush's policy of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons provides fresh evidence of the fulfilment by the United States of its obligations under article VI of the NPT.

New challenges call for new solutions. I have outlined for the Committee some of the new approaches that the United States is taking to combat today's threats. In the effort to contain these threats,

perhaps even more than during the cold war, the cooperation of all responsible Governments is essential. Our delegation urges the Committee and the States represented here to do their part and reaffirms its commitment to work with all willing delegations in pursuit of an effective multilateralism.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Mr. Chairman, let me first congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and voice our hope that, under your leadership, the First Committee will have a positive and productive session.

We meet at a troubled time for multilateral arms control. The failure this May of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to agree on any substantive conclusion had already cast a shadow over prospects for advancing the Treaty's goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Last month, the inability of the General Assembly summit to agree on a text on non-proliferation and disarmament testified further to the disunity of the international community. The Secretary-General, the Prime Minister of Canada and others have rightly decried this failure of political responsibility and have admonished us to renew negotiations on this most vital issue. The weapons of mass destruction that threaten our existence have not disappeared just because the summit failed to find an agreed formula for referring to our obligation to curb their proliferation and effect their elimination.

As the situations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran have thrown into relief, failures to comply with NPT undertakings adversely affect our common interest in sustaining the authority of the NPT regime and advancing its goals. Canada hopes that Iran will take the requested remedial action to restore confidence in its commitment to the Treaty's fundamental obligations, and that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will implement at an early date its recent commitment to abandon nuclear weapons and related programmes, return to the NPT and accept comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

In Canada's view, we will be able to reinforce the existing non-proliferation and disarmament regime and advance vital international security goals only if we are able to renew a sense of common purpose and mutual respect in this endeavour. Such regimes are only as strong as their weakest link. It does little for the common good if one country's efforts to strengthen implementation of treaty obligations are undermined by another's neglect of its responsibilities.

In the NPT context, Canada has repeatedly pointed to the important role of the additional protocols in strengthening the IAEA's ability to provide assurances of the absence of undeclared nuclear material. As a result of activities under Canada's Additional Protocol, for example, the Director General of the IAEA was able to report to the Board of Governors last month the Agency's confirmation of the peaceful nature of Canada's nuclear programme. I know that that is a reassurance for us all. We must also, however, recall that the failure of 32 States to fulfil the basic obligation to conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency potentially opens up a huge vulnerability in the international safeguards system.

Similarly, we must recognize the vital moral, legal and geopolitical importance of full compliance by all States with their past commitments and the strict maintenance of non-proliferation and disarmament standards in dealing with all States inside and outside the NPT regime if that regime is to continue to be taken seriously and to perform its vital protective function for us all.

Sixty years seem, unfortunately, to have dulled our memories of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Must humanity relive those horrors to regain its resolve to eliminate such weapons once and for all? For Canada the answer is clear: we have to reinvigorate our efforts and those of like-minded States worldwide to salvage the NPT as the core legal commitment to eliminating all nuclear arsenals and preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons by others. To promote such renewal of the NPT, Canada has proposed new arrangements, including the holding of annual conferences of States parties. Since the failure of the Review Conference has left us with a procedural status quo that would have rendered 2000 a dead year for the NPT, it may well be worth exploring the possibility of bringing NPT States parties together next year in a special session that would address the reform agenda and go some way towards making up for the time wasted this May.

In our view, recent setbacks in the arms control field should not lead us into despair or apathy, but

should rather serve as spurs to corrective action. In this regard, the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament has become unconscionable. We are therefore pleased that the concerned States are developing initiatives — in Geneva, here in New York and elsewhere — to ensure that multilateral work on pressing disarmament tasks is not indefinitely stymied. The fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was held last month in this building. There, the 176 signatories to that landmark accord reiterated their determination to bring the comprehensive ban on nuclear testing into full legal effect and appealed especially to those holding up entry into force to sign and/or ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. Canada was responsible for introducing the concept of regional action on ratification into the Final Declaration (CTCT-Art.XIV/2005/6, annex) and will be following up on implementation of the concept.

Next year will bring major review conferences in three areas of interest to this Committee: the first review of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons; the sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention; and the third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We believe that these meetings represent important opportunities to advance, in a tangible manner, the aims of those key agreements. Another chapter in the human security success story that is the Ottawa Convention on landmines will be written next month in Zagreb, when States and civil society partners will review progress in implementing the far-reaching Action Plan adopted at last year's Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World.

In these sphere of weapons of mass destruction, Canada is pleased with the continued momentum that has characterized the Global Partnership's efforts to destroy the dangerous detritus of the cold war.

The current challenges to the integrity of international non-proliferation and disarmament regimes have underscored the central role that verification and compliance play in maintaining the confidence of States in these security arrangements. Canada is pleased that, starting next January, a United Nations panel of experts will take up the subject of verification in all its aspects and the United Nations role therein. We hope that the work of the experts will yield practical results for this crucial aspect of international security commitments.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to working with you and with other delegations to ensure that the work of the First Committee reflects the reform decisions taken last year and that the Committee achieves a marked improvement in the effectiveness and value of its proceedings. Our delegation intends to contribute actively to thematic debates, which we hope will ensure a lively yet coherent exchange of views on key topics and provide for interaction with United Nations officials, working group Chairs and independent experts concerned with the Committee's subject matter.

As one aim of the reform effort is to shorten the general debate and encourage brevity in opening statements, I will try to set a good example in this regard by ending my speech now.

Ms. Mtshali (South Africa): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the partners of the New Agenda Coalition, namely Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and my own country, South Africa. Please accept our congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee this year and the assurance of the Coalition's support for your efforts to steer us towards a successful and meaningful conclusion of our deliberations during the next four weeks.

This year's session coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. It also coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No other event in human history has more tragically and vividly illustrated the horror of nuclear weapons. Today, the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki continues to provide real meaning to the collective efforts of the international community to rid the planet of nuclear weapons — and, indeed, all weapons of mass destruction.

International peace and security continue to be threatened by the development and possession of nuclear weapons and the real risk of such weapons being used. Despite the international community's best efforts to date, the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation remains a reality. That risk is exacerbated in situations where conflict and inadequate safeguards exist. It is disconcerting that a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

has sought to withdraw from it. It is also disconcerting that more than one State party has entered into a nuclear cooperation agreement with a State not party to the NPT.

In view of those threatening developments, the New Agenda Coalition believes that efforts to eliminate the proliferation of nuclear weapons cannot be sustainable without equal efforts being made to eliminate nuclear weapons themselves. That is why nuclear disarmament is as important today as it has been in the past, if not more important.

In 1998, the Foreign Ministers of the New Agenda Coalition declared, inter alia, that Coalition partners were "jointly resolved to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons" (*A/53/138, annex*). I wish to make it clear that the Coalition's resolve remains as strong as ever, as does its commitment to further the cause of nuclear disarmament.

At present, the nuclear-disarmament and nuclear-non-proliferation regime faces significant challenges. The failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to achieve any substantive outcome serves to confirm that. In addition, the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to reach agreement on a programme of work further underscores that fact, as does the delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), to cite but a few examples.

The New Agenda Coalition continues to believe that the NPT remains the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament. We therefore repeat our call for its universality. In essence, the Treaty requires those that do not possess nuclear weapons not to acquire such weapons, while also requiring those that do possess them to disarm. At the same time, it also recognizes the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with the Treaty.

The review process of the Treaty has worked to strengthen its implementation. The outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, including the decisions reached and the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East, as well as the final document of the 2000 Review Conference, established concrete obligations for States parties to ensure the successful completion of the Treaty's objectives, including nuclear-weapon States' unequivocal undertaking to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, which now, unfortunately, amount to as many as 50,000 nuclear weapons. As we are all aware, those commitments still stand.

While there can be little doubt that the latest NPT Review Conference failed to inspire the international community to believe that the elimination of nuclear weapons was any closer than it had been in 2000, it did not affect the status of previously agreed commitments. We remain concerned at efforts by some States parties to disengage or draw back from agreements already made under the NPT umbrella. Such actions undermine the Treaty and encourage attempts to renegotiate agreements already reached. In addition, they run counter to the very essence of multilateralism.

The New Agenda Coalition remains very concerned about current proliferation risks. Through its work towards nuclear disarmament, the New Agenda Coalition's objective is to improve the security of all nations. In that context, we remain convinced that positive progress on nuclear disarmament would also improve global security with respect to proliferation. It is logical that those issues are inextricably linked. Therefore, progress on both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is required in order to attain the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. Although that is not a new concept, some States parties continue to place primary emphasis on one or the other of those aspects. NPT States parties should not argue that all is well with any one particular aspect of the Treaty — be it nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation or peaceful uses — or that one aspect outweighs the others. If we wish to make progress, it should thus be clear that all aspects of the NPT should be strictly implemented and enforced. Each article of the NPT remains binding on all States parties at all times and in all circumstances, and it is imperative that all States parties be held fully accountable for strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty.

The New Agenda Coalition has always maintained that the only real guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again. As a positive step, and for as long as nuclear weapons exist, nuclear-weapon States need to reaffirm and fully respect their existing commitments with regard to security assurances, pending the conclusion of multilaterally negotiated legally binding

security assurances for all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

It goes without saying that the continued existence of nuclear weapons also increases the risk of such weapons falling into the hands of non-State actors, despite the best preventive efforts of those that possess nuclear weapons. In that regard, it should be clear that the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States remains incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as well as with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security.

In addition, the New Agenda Coalition seeks accelerated implementation of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation obligations and the achievement of the universality of the NPT. We therefore call upon India, Israel and Pakistan, which continue to retain the nuclear-weapons option and which have not yet acceded to the NPT, to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States promptly and without conditions and to place all their nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

We urge all States parties, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to implement the 2000 NPT Review Conference's practical steps on nuclear disarmament.

We call upon the Conference on Disarmament, and particularly on its nuclear-weapon States members, to agree on a programme of work and to resume negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein (see CD/1288), taking into account both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

We reaffirm the importance and the urgency of the signatures and ratifications required to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We recall that the principles of irreversibility, transparency and verifiability are key elements in the nuclear disarmament process.

We call for a reversal of the continuing role given to nuclear weapons as part of security doctrines, including rationalizations for the use of nuclear weapons and for the possible development of new types of such weapons.

We recall the resolution on the Middle East, which was an integral part of the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and renew our support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

As we are all aware, the recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly failed to reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The New Agenda Coalition deeply regrets that lost opportunity, which further underscores the challenges to the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. However, those and other challenges strengthen the Coalition's resolve and commitment to pursue the objectives set out in the joint declaration of its Foreign Ministers of 9 June 1998 in order to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We remain confident that, under your able leadership and with your vast experience, our deliberations will reach a positive conclusion enabling us to forward recommendations to the General Assembly. The NAM will extend its full support and cooperation in facilitating your task of presiding over this important Committee.

The NAM once again strongly underlines that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations provide the only sustainable method of addressing disarmament and international security issues. We are therefore not satisfied with the decisions contained in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the recent United Nations summit, given that not all of our concerns and interests were reflected in the text. In that regard, the NAM is deeply disappointed at the outcome document's lack of a section on disarmament and non-proliferation. We missed another opportunity to articulate the necessary political will and determination with a view to setting a new direction and to addressing these critical issues facing the international

community. That is another setback for the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation after the failure of last May's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We therefore stress the importance of the First Committee and the rest of the multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, in dealing with questions of disarmament and related international security issues. We also underline the need to strengthen the forums of the disarmament machinery as places for balanced, constructive and comprehensive deliberation and negotiation in accordance with the principles of the Charter and multilaterally negotiated treaties, agreements and conventions.

In view of those overwhelming considerations, we encourage all States to work closely and constructively to fully utilize the forthcoming substantive sessions of the Open-ended Working Group to Consider the Objectives and Agenda for the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament. The convening of such a special session can set the future course of action, including a balanced approach, to reach new consensus in the areas of arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and related international security matters, including undertaking a comprehensive review of disarmament machinery.

The NAM remains alarmed by the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We underscore that the responsibility for managing and achieving worldwide economic and social development, as well as for responding effectively to threats to international peace and security, must be shared among all nations of the world and must be exercised multilaterally. In that context, the United Nations must play the central role as the most universal and representative intergovernmental organization.

The NAM emphasizes that progress in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential to strengthening international peace and security. We appeal to all States to pursue and intensify multilateral negotiations, as agreed by consensus in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament under effective international control and strengthening international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes.

The NAM reiterates its principled position that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority and underscores its deep concern over the lack of progress towards accomplishing the total elimination of nuclear arsenals by nuclear-weapon States. We also express our serious concern that the development of new types of nuclear weapons runs counter to the assurances provided by nuclear-weapon States at the time of the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The NAM believes that the efforts of the international community directed at non-proliferation should take place in parallel to simultaneous efforts aiming at nuclear disarmament. We further believe that the most effective way of preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is through the total elimination of such weapons. In that context, we underline that the threat posed by terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction must be addressed within the framework of the United Nations and through international cooperation, consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law.

The NAM emphasizes the need to respect the inalienable right of developing countries to engage in research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. We reaffirm that each country's choices and decisions in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be respected without jeopardizing its policies or international cooperation agreements and arrangements for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and its fuel-cycles policies.

The NAM reaffirms the need for all States to fulfil their obligations in relation to arms control and disarmament and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all its aspects. The NAM reiterates that the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament.

The NAM also reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, pending the total elimination of such weapons, efforts to conclude a universal, unconditional

and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority.

The NAM remains deeply concerned over the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. We also emphasize the importance of early and full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Furthermore, the NAM underlines the need to ensure that any action by the Security Council does not undermine existing international treaty regimes on weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, the work of international organizations established in that regard such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons or the role of the General Assembly.

Let me conclude by reiterating the need for all States to demonstrate the necessary political will during this session of the First Committee. In that regard, the NAM will actively and constructively participate in the deliberations and negotiations, including by submitting draft resolutions and draft decisions.

Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia): I should like, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. I also extend my sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba of Mexico, for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the work of the Committee during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, as well as for the innovative measures that he introduced.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), as well as with the statement that will be delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

My delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing our deepest condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of the Republic of Indonesia over the bomb attacks in Bali over the weekend.

My delegation is disappointed with the state of affairs in the field of disarmament and international security in 2005. The positive outlook and brighter prospects for progress in this field, generated upon the conclusion of the Committee's work last year, have thus far come to naught. The States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to reach agreement on any substantive issues at the NPT Review Conference last May. We failed to reach agreement on even a single paragraph regarding disarmament and non-proliferation for the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). We are still searching for the most effective measures to collectively address the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists.

The devastating consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons have not been alleviated.

The Conference on Disarmament remains deadlocked, and the Disarmament Commission has again this year been unable to agree on an agenda.

Notwithstanding what I have just said, my delegation is pleased with the significant developments and steady progress made over the past year with regard to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as in the areas of nuclear-weapon-free zones, small arms and light weapons and anti-personnel mines.

As the current Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, Malaysia remains steadfast to the long-established and principled position of the NAM in the field of disarmament and international security. The Non-Aligned Movement will continue to be at the forefront of the global campaign for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. The decisions and pronouncements concerning those questions made by NAM leaders at their thirteenth Summit Conference, held at Kuala Lumpur in February 2003, their annual ministerial meetings in New York in September 2003, October 2004 and September 2005, their fourteenth ministerial conference, held in Durban in August 2004, and their special meeting in Doha in June this year

shall remain the road map for Malaysia and the other members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation would like to stress that all those six high-level meetings of the NAM, while addressing the wide-ranging ramifications of weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons and related issues, have expressed strong concern at the growing resort to unilateralism and unilaterally imposed prescriptions. In that context, they have underlined and affirmed that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, provide the only sustainable method of dealing with the multiplicity of disarmament and international security issues. In addition, NAM leaders remain firm in their conviction that disarmament and non-proliferation should be pursued together and in a mutually reinforcing manner.

As we meet today, the stress remains on proliferation rather than on disarmament in good faith. The lack of balance in the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) threatens to unravel the NPT regime, which remains a critical component of the global disarmament framework.

My delegation would like to recapitulate that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament underscored the fact that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is the ultimate goal of multilateral disarmament efforts. That goal is far from being achieved. All Member States agreed at that special session that nuclear weapons posed the greatest danger to humankind and to the survival of human civilization. Today, all States remain in full agreement with that conclusion, which was reached almost three decades ago. There should not be any doubt that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a threat to international peace and security. More important, however, we must not forget that the existence of those weapons in the first place is a threat to the survival of humankind and of our planet.

We all have concerns about nuclear non-proliferation, both vertical and horizontal. We all have fears about nuclear terrorism. We shall all continue to have nightmares for as long as nuclear weapons continue to exist. Humankind has called for their total elimination. At the same time, we want to preserve the inherent right to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, including energy. We all share collective responsibility to address those common concerns, allay our fears and reduce our nightmares, both now and in the future.

While recognizing recent moves by nuclear-weapon States that could lead towards disarmament, my delegation reiterates its deep concern over the slow pace of progress in that regard. Nuclear-weapon States continue to believe in the relevance of nuclear weapons, despite the existence of a globalized and interconnected world. Nuclear-weapon States and those States remaining outside the NPT continue to develop and modernize their nuclear arsenals, threatening international peace and security. We must all call for an end to that madness and seek the elimination and banning of all forms of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing, as well as the rejection of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. We must all be mindful of the fact that the issue of non-compliance applies both to nuclear disarmament and to nuclear non-proliferation. In that connection, the implementation of article VI of the NPT by nuclear-weapon States is crucial. The 13 practical steps for pursuing nuclear disarmament, identified at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, set out an achievable framework for nuclear disarmament.

On the question of verification and enforcement relating to weapons of mass destruction, Malaysia shares the view of many countries that existing multilateral treaty-based mechanisms, such as those under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), need to be strengthened. Any problems in this area should be resolved within the framework of those mechanisms through cooperation, dialogue and negotiations, in order to reach a constructive outcome. My delegation believes that resorting to other means beyond those mechanisms, such as through the Security Council, would be counterproductive. It is critical that there exist the necessary political will to enable those mechanisms to work in a fair, balanced and non-discriminatory manner, taking into consideration the interests of everyone concerned. Malaysia believes that full adherence to all provisions of international disarmament treaties and conventions by States parties is the only sustainable approach to multilateral disarmament and the prevention of proliferation activities.

The universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is crucial. Pending its entry into force, all nuclear-weapon States must maintain the

current moratorium on nuclear-test explosions. For its part, Malaysia is taking the necessary steps to ratify the CTBT in the immediate future.

My delegation remains supportive of all efforts geared towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones worldwide, in particular in the Middle East. Malaysia will continue to work with its other fellow member States in the Association of South-East Asian Nations to realize our aspiration to achieve the acceptance of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. In that connection, and in welcoming the declaration adopted at the Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held at Tlatelolco on 28 April this year, my delegation is convinced that the measures contained therein can certainly serve as the basis to strengthen the nuclear-weapon-free zone regime and contribute to disarmament and non-proliferation processes, and in particular to analyse ways of cooperation that can contribute to achieving the universal goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The challenges and threats posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, especially to developing countries, should not be taken lightly. They must be our genuine concern collectively, and not just in the countries or regions where conflicts have occurred or are still raging. In that connection, several ongoing undertakings are critical. My delegation remains committed to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. My delegation recognizes the importance of an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. We also believe that the General Assembly should adopt such an instrument. My delegation also recognizes the need to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.

In the course of the past year, we have witnessed the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to launch any substantive work. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to resume without delay its important role of negotiating new arms control and disarmament agreements, with an emphasis on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Similarly, the failure of the Disarmament Commission to agree on an agenda for its substantive session is another setback to multilateral disarmament initiatives. My delegation is disheartened by those developments. Those two important disarmament mechanisms must be able to overcome those obstacles so as to move the process forward. My delegation therefore believes that the First Committee has the duty to reaffirm the urgent need to make progress on substantive issues and to identify specific initiatives to address the security concerns of all Member States.

As in the past, Malaysia will in due course introduce two First Committee draft resolutions: on the follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the legality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons; and on the question on Antarctica. It is the desire of my delegation and other delegations sponsoring those two draft resolutions to engage all Member States with a view to securing their support for these two important texts.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to recall that during the Millennium Summit five years ago, our leaders expressed their resolve to, inter alia, strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving that aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways in which to eliminate nuclear dangers. Obviously, their resolve remains unfulfilled.

In that connection, my delegation calls upon all Member States to continue to explore new ideas and to adopt a fresh outlook concerning our collective efforts in the field of disarmament and international security. Indeed, international peace and security cannot be fully maintained without significant progress in the area of disarmament with regard to weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

The international community already possesses the necessary tools to advance the disarmament process. What is required is the strengthening of existing disarmament-treaty-based mechanisms with the full support and political will of States. Without such political will, there cannot be a genuine international solution to questions concerning disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It is high time that we reoriented ourselves towards the common objective of achieving general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Multilateralism in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation is under

growing stress. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to produce a substantive outcome. The recent world summit could not agree on a text on how to deal with grave proliferation challenges. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) seems to be more distant than ever. The Conference on Disarmament is still caught in a long-lasting impasse. And the Disarmament Commission has not delivered any recommendations for years.

That grim situation is unfortunate in view of all the pressing security challenges we are facing, such as the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to new States and terrorist groups, the illicit trafficking in nuclear technology, the existence of a large amount of unsecured nuclear material, the growing fear that nuclear weapons might be given an additional and more prominent role in security policies, and insufficient progress in nuclear disarmament.

A new course in multilateral arms control diplomacy is achievable. As is well known, Norway, together with six other countries from various regions of the world, submitted concrete texts for the draft summit outcome document. The initiative was well received. Regrettably, the proposal did not command the required consensus.

That cross-regional initiative on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation demonstrated that countries from different groups and with differing perspectives could set aside past differences and reach an agreement. The seven countries made a deliberate choice to be guided by the spirit of compromise. Norway will take up the challenge laid out by the Secretary-General and will continue to seek consensus and concrete results. We will do so within the group of seven countries and together with all the countries that have supported our efforts.

Compliance is a precondition for the credibility of arms control treaties. Non-compliance is a challenge to multilateralism. Regrettably, the international community has been confronted with serious compliance matters.

Since October 2003, good progress has been made in correcting the breaches in Iran's obligations under its safeguards agreement. However, there remains a confidence deficit that hampers a political solution. We therefore urge Iran to heed the plea of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for transparency measures that go beyond the formal requirements of the Additional Protocol, in order to bring the investigations to a conclusion as soon as possible. It is up to Iran to allow diplomacy to do its job in removing our justified concerns about its nuclear programme. We must avoid steps that might escalate the situation. It should be in the interest of all parties to pave the way for the resumption of negotiations.

Norway welcomes the agreement reached in the six-party talks concerning the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We expect all parties to live up to their commitments and to take coordinated steps in line with the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action", aimed at implementing the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Despite setbacks in key areas of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation diplomacy, there are more hopeful developments. Let me highlight the most important of them.

We welcome the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Our next challenge is to make those two instruments universal.

It is also encouraging that an increasing number of countries are concluding IAEA Additional Protocols, but progress is too slow. We must seek universal implementation of that improved verification instrument.

The nuclear arms reductions stipulated by the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty are a positive contribution to the fulfilment of NPT disarmament obligations. However, we need irreversible cuts beyond the Treaty.

Norway also welcomes the newly negotiated draft instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms. The General Assembly must now adopt the proposed instrument and should also provide direction on how to deal with the question of ammunition. Moreover, we expect the General Assembly to provide a mandate for a group of governmental experts to explore ways in which to enhance international cooperation aimed at combating the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons.

The Mine Ban Treaty remains strong evidence of constructive multilateralism and proof that it is possible to work together in innovative ways.

Norway is pleased that the new Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is gathering increased support. The Norwegian Parliament has approved ratification of the Protocol. However, we need to develop even more effective instruments for preventing human suffering caused by the use of certain submunitions.

We also welcome the continued progress in the implementation of the Group of Eight's Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Norway is actively contributing to the Partnership through our programmes in north-western Russia.

Norway is pleased that the Proliferation Security Initiative has widespread support. It is an important instrument in fighting international terrorism.

We appreciate the fact that more countries are signing the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We must work for universal adherence to the Code.

While we have achieved progress in some fields, we are still facing serious challenges. At the present session, the General Assembly should therefore send the forceful message to the relevant multilateral bodies that they must get down to real business. At the same time, the First Committee should reaffirm the relevance of the NPT and the close interlinkage among disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use.

The Committee should again express the impatience of the international community to see the early entry into force of the CTBT. That was clearly demonstrated a few weeks ago here in New York at the Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT.

It is equally important that the Committee support the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and that it call for steps to further strengthen those two vital treaties.

In conclusion, the proliferation challenges facing us are serious. We must overcome our disappointment with the NPT Review Conference and the world summit. We must bring greater determination to our efforts to forge a new global disarmament and non-proliferation consensus. We must mobilize the political will necessary to make multilateralism work. We have a choice; let us use it for the sake of international peace and security.

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Sir, we congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship.

Secondly, we would like to express our condolences to the people and the Government of Indonesia with respect to the recent terrorist attack in Bali. This is a tangible demonstration of the fact that terrorism poses a threat to States both of the North and of the South.

Chile wants to be quite specific and to the point in this year's general debate. We have repeatedly stated our disagreement with the ritual succession of general speeches reiterating positions we could all recite from memory. Moreover, we reaffirm our readiness to make use of our time for interactive debate without written texts. Here, we urge you, Mr. Chairman, to emulate Ambassador De Alba.

We believe that the impasse in the multilateral disarmament arena is largely a reflection of the confrontation between two schools of thought. The first emphasizes principles and ultimate goals enshrined in disarmament instruments whose implementation, given current political realities, requires conditions that still do not exist. On the other hand, there is a part of the international community that stresses the urgency of attaining partial or short-term objectives, which are also embodied in those instruments and which respond to immediate and pressing collective security requirements.

For Chile, it is erroneous to pose a dilemma between disarmament and non-proliferation. The general and complete disarmament called for in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an ultimate objective that we have by no means abandoned. But bringing it about requires a series of steps conditioned by political circumstances that must be met over time and that require both national will and a global security context that would enable all States, but in particular certain key players, to feel that their vital interests are being properly safeguarded.

Non-proliferation is a powerful factor within this global security context that still has not come about. We can use millions of words to badger the nuclear Powers about their disarmament commitments, but the only thing that could possibly prompt them to part with

their atomic arsenals is a conviction that their survival no longer requires them.

With regard to the security perception of the major Powers, Chile notes with satisfaction that there has been substantive progress. When Stanley Kubrik filmed his "Dr. Stranglove" in the 1960s, nuclear holocaust was a real threat, far more serious than today. The importance of a reduction of the number of nuclear warheads, the lowering of alert thresholds and the elimination of entire families of weapons stems from the fact that the Powers concerned have made giant strides towards building mutual confidence. And without that mutual confidence there never will be nuclear disarmament. All of us gathered in this room know that very well.

On the other hand, international terrorism and the possibility that terrorists could acquire weapons of mass destruction has bred an urgent problem that concerns most vital interests of all States, large or small, nuclear or not. To come to grips with this urgent problem does not mean forgetting either the principles or the final objectives, but rather requires rational action and a sense of what is politically timely and appropriate.

The same can be said about current attempts at proliferation with which the international community is now perfectly familiar. The cause of nuclear disarmament is not moved forward one millimetre by making a fuss about non-discrimination or by insisting on the inalienable right of States to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is legally and morally obvious that that right can be invoked only by States that scrupulously comply with their non-proliferation obligations and do not play hide and seek with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Moreover, certain nuclear Powers could do more to let multilateral disarmament efforts bear fruit. No multilateral machinery is perfect. But one thing is certain: the multilateral format confers political legitimacy that adds synergistically to the context of confidence and global security that is beneficial to all of us. It will be far easier for the five permanent members of the Security Council to win backing for their anti-proliferation initiatives if the rest of the international community sees that they too are ready to cooperate to make a success of multilateral initiatives of global interest. As the author Miguel de Unamuno might put it, the point is not just to win, but to win the other side over. In this area, body language is key.

Notwithstanding the impasse we are going through, there is room for forward movement, when there is a minimum of goodwill and diplomatic skill, such as Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands showed in steering work on Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to a successful conclusion. Let us take advantage of what room there is and move forward incrementally, thus creating an environment of confidence and good will that would allow us to advance towards general and complete disarmament.

I believe we all know full well that this will be a long and hard road and that neither our generation nor the next generation will reach the goal. No one, however, will ever succeed if we obstinately hunker down in the here and now, ignoring reality and using our multilateral institutions to fling barbs and score points. Of all the dimensions of multilateral diplomacy, it is disarmament that requires the greatest political realism as well as a maximum of perseverance and good will. Let us once and for all put these qualities into practice.

With regard to the central issues of our agenda to be discussed in the thematic debate, Chile fully endorses the text introduced by Norway, representing a group of seven countries belonging to all political and regional groups here, at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

The statement made by Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group fully reflects our views.

The Chairman: The Permanent Observer of the Holy See has asked to make a statement and, in the absence of objection, I give him the floor.

Archibishop Migliore (Holy See): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee.

Over the past few months, the international community had had some hope that issues of disarmament and non-proliferation would be addressed by the world leaders who came to the summit for the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. Indeed, the draft document prepared for the summit called on States to pursue and intensify negotiations with a view to advancing general and complete disarmament and strengthening the international non-proliferation regime. It encouraged them to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions.

Some specific steps were suggested. Yet that language did not appear in the outcome document that was adopted (resolution 60/1).

The Secretary-General labelled that exclusion a disgrace. It happened not because most leaders and Governments do not care — many of them care a great deal about the suffering and increased dangers posed by the proliferation of weaponry of all kinds — but because the pressure is such that the legitimate and grave concerns of many, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, are often set aside.

Although the opening for signature of the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism was an important step forward in reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism, it remains deplorable that the NPT Review Conference in May ended without a single substantive decision. Nuclear weapons are becoming a permanent feature of some military doctrines, and there has been a dramatic 20 per cent increase in global military spending in the past two years. The combined arms sales of the top 100 arms-producing companies increased 25 per cent over a one-year period. Small arms kill at least 500,000 people per year, and United Nations conferences on this issue have still not produced a legally binding instrument on small arms transfers. The legal arms trade is once more on the rise, and the illegal flow of arms to the world's conflict zones is responsible for countless deaths. Terrorist attacks using assault rifles, automatic weapons, hand grenades, landmines, shoulder-launched missiles and small explosives are mounting.

It is disappointing that the principles of and progress on disarmament are being weakened both by the reluctance of some to disarm and by the unwillingness of others publicly to take them to task for such an attitude. The Holy See reaffirms the importance of arms control and disarmament, which are fundamental pillars of the architecture of peace.

All Members of the United Nations have a duty to keep working on the technical, legal and political elements of the disarmament agenda. That duty is becoming ever more relevant, since we all know that security for all is enhanced when disarmament and development steps complement one another. The United Nations pioneered studies which show that there is an integral relationship between disarmament, development and security. We must point up the economic benefits of disarmament measures. Development alternatives to militarism must be the constant work of the First Committee.

The Committee bears a special responsibility this year to make up, to the extent possible, for the omission of disarmament from the Summit's outcome document. That ought not to be hard to do, because the great majority of States want to move the disarmament agenda forward, surely and speedily. Efforts will be made to revitalize the First Committee this year and to set up special working committees to deal with nuclear-weapons issues, and that work should be supported. Other efforts will be made to bring like-minded States together to lay the technical, legal and political groundwork for a nuclear-weapons convention. Those are signs that States are serious about overcoming the obstacles that stand in the way of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Similarly, there is an urgent need to work locally, nationally, regionally and globally to eradicate small arms and light weapons. Multifaceted action incorporating arms control, crime reduction and peacebuilding components will advance human security. The important contributions made by civil society should be acknowledged by Governments. Expanding partnerships between Governments and civil society would greatly strengthen disarmament efforts.

The past year has not been a good one for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Glossing over failures does not serve the cause of peace. But we have a responsibility to move from analysis to action. We the peoples of the United Nations — as the Charter so eloquently refers to humanity — deserve to be free from the scourge of self-destruction.

Organization of work

The Chairman: Thanks to the cooperation of representatives, we have successfully exhausted this morning's list of speakers. There are only three speakers on the list for this afternoon: the United Arab Emirates, Algeria and Nigeria. The Department of General Assembly and Conference Management has told us that there are other meetings that could take place in this Conference Room this afternoon, so there would be no penalty if we were to reconvene tomorrow morning, instead of this afternoon. The United Arab Emirates, Algeria and Nigeria have kindly agreed to speak tomorrow morning, instead of this afternoon. Therefore, there will be no First Committee meeting this afternoon.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.